



Steve Gooch
District 9

P.O. Box 600
Dahlonega, GA 90533

706.300.6568 (phone)
706.864.1036 (fax) sgooch@windstream.net **FEBRUARY 2010**

The State Transportation Board regularly scheduled meetings were held on February 17 & 18 in the Department's Atlanta office. A report was provided on construction lettings for fiscal year 2010 indicating there were 235 awards valued at approximately \$738 million, not including an additional 623 state aid awards worth \$66 million. **The full report is attached.**

Four Board Committees met in advance of the full Board meeting: Finance, Legislative, Public Private Partnerships (P3) and Statewide Transportation Plan/Strategic Planning. Highlights from the meetings are:

FINANCE - Funds realized from right-of-way de-authorizations now total over \$259 million, and approximately another \$15 million in funds will be de-authorized from projects closed out last week.

Through January 31st, about \$1.7 billion of FY2010's \$2.7 billion budget has been spent, and only \$361 million of the anticipated \$1.06 billion in Federal funds had been received by the Department.

LEGISLATIVE - Key bills the Department is supporting are moving forward, including several related to Transportation Funding, with the most notable being HB1218 titled Transportation Investment Act of 2010. Alternative Delivery Methods are addressed in SB305, Multiyear Construction Agreements in HB1135 and SR821, and Rural Transportation Coordination in bill SB22

The Committee reviewed two new bills that would have positive impacts on the Department. The first is HB 1186 dealing with P3 Ad Valorem Tax Exemption which ensures that public property used for transportation projects that are procured by GDOT under the public-private partnership law remain exempt from ad valorem property tax. The second bill is HB 1174 which primarily updates Georgia State Code with Federal revisions and codifies permit rules. The full Board voted to support these two additional bills.

Federal funding related to the SAFETEA-LU extension and potential second round of ARRA funding. Currently, both the US Congress and the US Senate are working on bills to extend SAFETEA-LU through the end of the Federal fiscal year. Commissioner Vance C. Smith, Jr. sent a letter to all the Delegation members urging them to resolve the funding issue.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3) - The first P3 project moving to procurement: West by Northwest Corridor, is now one procurement for two projects with the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) being issued on February 26th.

The Environmental Legal Consultant procurement is underway in an effort to expedite the NEPA and permitting process for the Department. The RFQ was opened on February 12th and closes on March 1st for the evaluation process to begin.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN/STRATEGIC PLANNING - The draft Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP) that is being finalized at this time. The SSTP covers all modes of transportation and focuses on the business case for each mode, especially the return on investment to Georgia taxpayers. All of the various documents and lists that are required as a result of the passing of SB 200 last year are available for review online at www.IT3.ga.gov.

A brief overview of the new Freight and Logistics Plan that the Department has undertaken with the assistance of the Department of Economic Development and the Center for Innovation of Logistics was presented. The plan development calls for several early deliverables with the complete plan being delivered in 18-months.

Plan goals are:

- Strategic guide of activities and projects to improve the flow of commerce through Georgia
- Provide options and strategies for short, medium and long-term freight transportation needs
- Develop a range of economic forecasts
- Project the state's future freight flows
- Determine benefit to cost ratios for identified projects
- Identify performance metrics for evaluating freight and logistics improvement projects

EXPERTS PANEL ON HIGH OCCUPANCY TOLL LANES SPONSORED BY THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE STATE ROAD & TOLLWAY AUTHORITY

State and local government officials, members of the business community, community civic organizations, media, members of the transportation industry and other interested parties were able to hear and learn about the implementation of HOT lane projects similar to the current project underway on I-85 in the metro area. A national perspective was presented by the panelists, including: Regina Mc Elroy, Director, Office of Innovative Program Delivery, Federal Highway Administration; Peggy Catlin, Deputy Director, Colorado Department of Transportation; Linda Koblick, Former Commissioner, Hennepin County, Minnesota; Tina Geiselbrecht, Assistant Transportation Researcher, Texas Transportation Institute.



GDOT Commissioner Vance C. Smith, Jr. moderates panel of experts as they discuss HOT lane implementation.

*Next Board Meeting—March 18, 2010
Atlanta, Georgia*